Whitehorse Liquor Store Survey 2009

Yukon
Liquor Corporation

This report was produced by the Yukon Government's Bureau of Statistics, which is a branch of the Government's Executive Council office. The Bureau was working for the Yukon Liquor Corporation which commissioned this report.

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INTRODUCTION

To continue to improve service to customers, Yukon Liquor Corporation again contracted the Yukon Bureau of Statistics to repeat its 2006 Whitehorse Liquor Store Survey.

The survey, which asked customers to rate the facility, products, and staff of the Whitehorse Liquor Store, used questions similar to those in the 2006 survey. This allows the results to be compared, and changes over time to be tracked.

Thank you to all the store customers who were able to take the time to participate!

METHODOLOGY

Yukon Bureau of Statistics provides complete impartiality in the analysis of survey results, as well as ensuring the confidentiality of individual responses.

The 2009 Whitehorse Liquor Store Survey was carried out from August 20-26. The interviews were conducted at the Whitehorse Liquor Store by Yukon Bureau of Statistics employees. Customers who agreed to take part in the survey were offered a Yukon Liquor Corporation Good Host Kit as a thank-you for their participation.

529 customers participated in the survey. Of those who did not participate, the majority cited "lack of time". The refusal rate, and the reasons, are consistent with the 2006 survey.

Executive Summary

STORE EXTERIOR

In general, customers are satisfied with the cleanliness of the store's exterior: two-thirds rated it as "good" or "excellent".

Parking is still an issue for customers. More than 40% of customers rated the parking as "fair" or "poor" – an improvement from the 60% of customers who felt that way in 2006. These customers felt that the parking area was difficult to navigate during busy times, and a number singled out the Ogilvie Street access as a problem.

More than 70% of customers did not express concerns about their safety or security when coming to the liquor store. This is a small improvement over 2006. However, those who did express concern were particularly concerned with "people hanging around outside", especially those who may be panhandling or intoxicated.

CUSTOMER SERVICE

Customers continue to be very happy with the quality of service they receive from staff at the Whitehorse store, with over 90% rating it as "good" or "excellent". They find the staff consistently friendly and courteous, and their purchases are processed quickly and efficiently at the till.

66% of customers stated that staff offered to assist them. This is a small improvement from 2006 (60%).

STORE INTERIOR

The store interior, the store layout, and ease of finding products were all rated significantly higher by customers in 2009 than in 2006. In 2009, 84% of customers rated the store interior as "good" or "excellent" (67% in 2006); 85% rated the store layout as "good" or "excellent" (74% in 2006); and 93% felt that it was easy to find the products they were looking for (84% in 2006). This substantial improvement is likely due to the very significant interior renovation project undertaken in the summer of 2007.

A number of customers provided very useful comments for future planning, such as lighting improvements.

PRODUCTS

Similar to 2006, roughly three-quarters of the 2009 customers felt the range of products carried by the Whitehorse Liquor Store was "good" or "excellent". However, nearly half also felt that other products should also be carried, with most focusing on a wider variety of wines and beers.

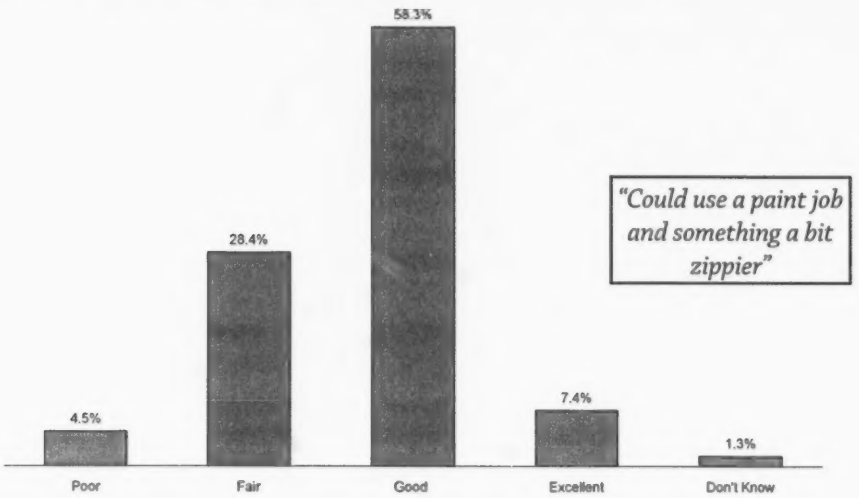
Customers were asked about the influence of various initiatives on their purchasing decisions. For example, although only 30% said that they were influenced by in-store product tasting, 80% of that group said that they would buy that product in addition to their regular purchase. Advice from staff continues to have the greatest influence on customer buying decisions.

WEBSITE

Only 16% of customers know about the Yukon Liquor Corporation's website; this is a slight improvement from 2006 (10%).

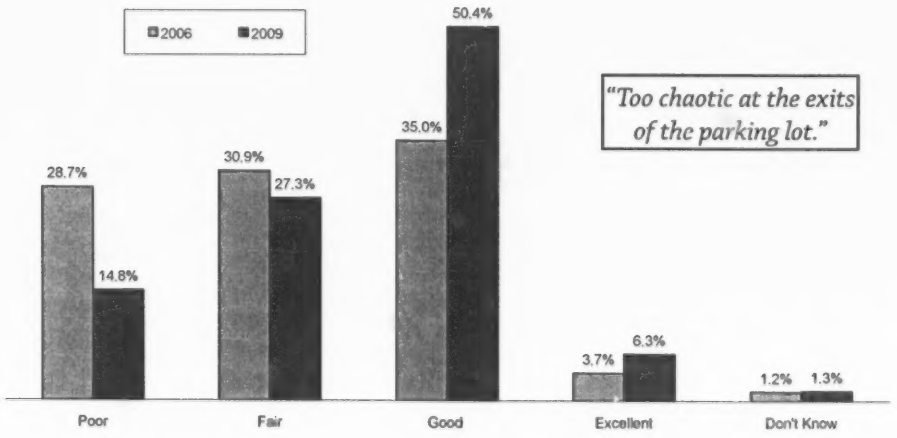
STORE EXTERIOR

1. a) Overall, how would you rate the overall cleanliness of the store exterior?



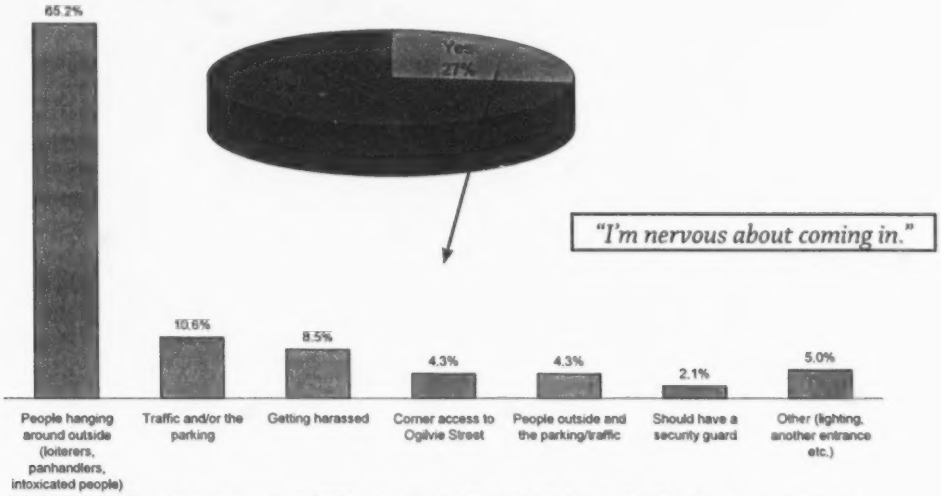
Two thirds of customers reported the overall cleanliness of the exterior of the Whitehorse store was "good" or "excellent".

1. b) Overall, how would you rate the parking?



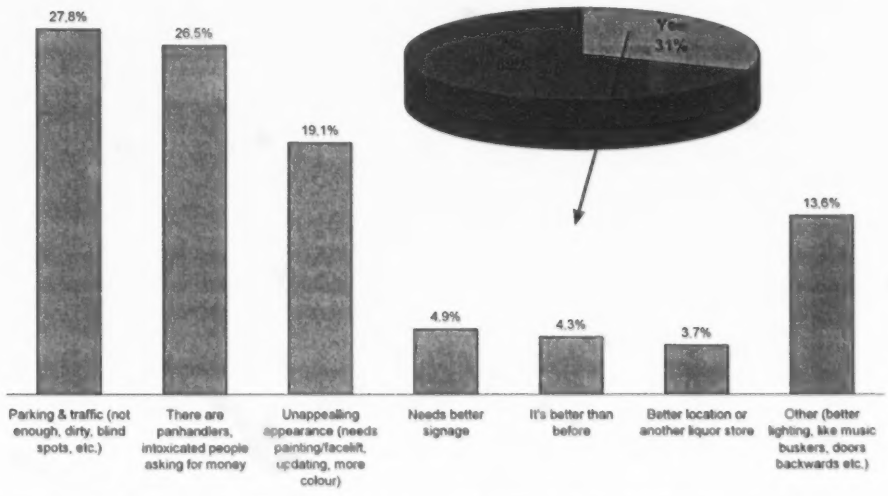
Parking was one area where customers were still unsatisfied. In 2009, 42% of customers rated the parking as "fair" or "poor". In the 2006 survey, 60% of customers rated the parking as "fair" or "poor".

2. *Do you have any concerns or suggestions about your safety or security when coming to the liquor store?*



A large majority of customers (73%) answered that "no", they didn't have concerns or suggestions about safety or security. The remaining one-quarter of the customers stated that "yes", they did have concerns. 65% of those responses, related to people hanging around outside the store. Of these comments, the majority were stated by women. A further 9% of comments related to concerns about being harassed outside the store. Safety or security concerns relating to parking and/or traffic were the second most common concerns.

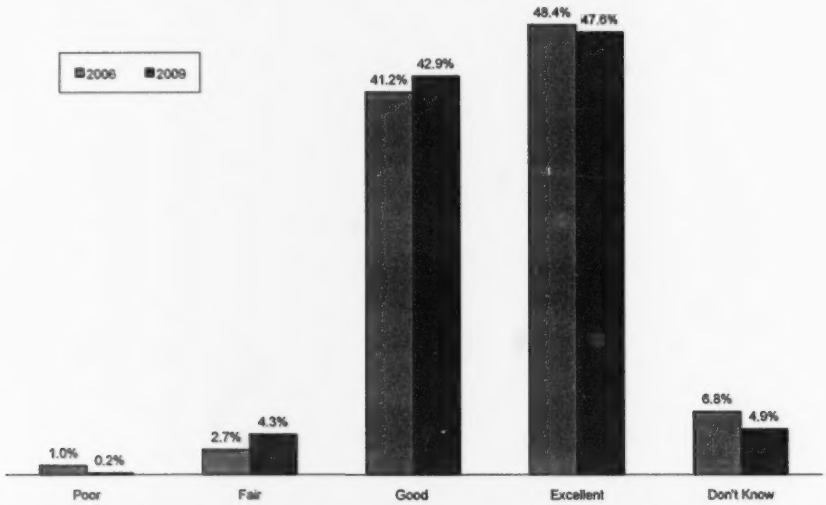
3. *Do you have any other comments about the outside of the store?*



A large majority of customers (69%) answered that "no", they didn't have any other comments about the exterior of the store. There were 162 comments provided and they varied considerably. Parking was raised as the number one concern. The loiterers and panhandlers were again raised as a concern. 19% of all comments were related to the exterior of the store needing updating.

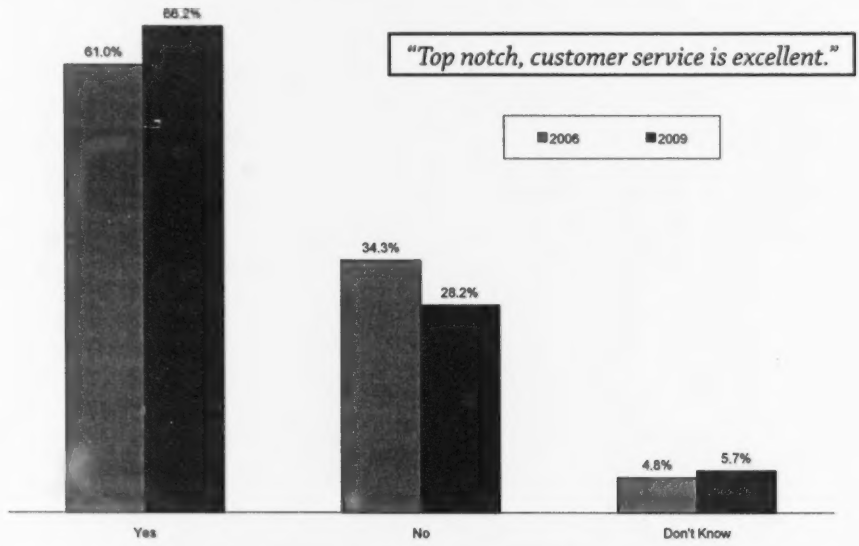
CUSTOMER SERVICE

4. Is the customer service you received at this store.....



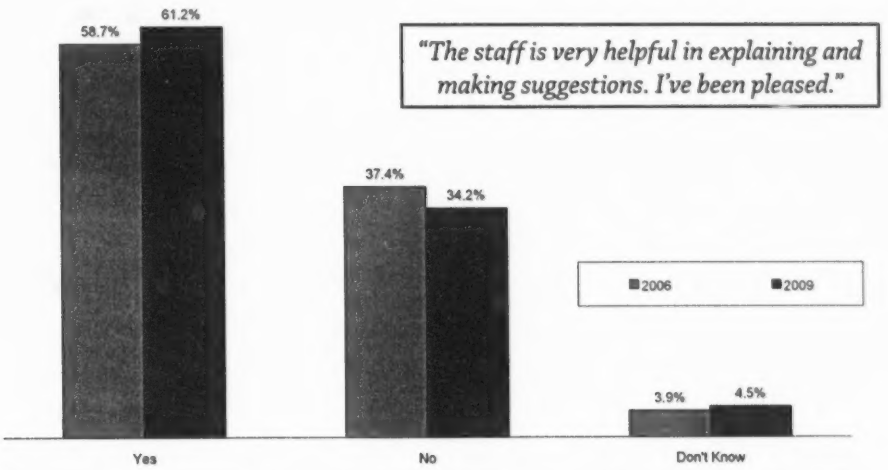
Over 90% of 2009 customers rated the customer service received as "good" or "excellent". This high rating is unchanged from the 2006 survey where 90% of customers also rated customer service as "good" or "excellent".

5. Did the staff offer to assist you?



Two-thirds of customers in the 2009 survey stated that the staff did offer to assist them. Of those who responded "yes" to this question, 97% stated the the "assistance was helpful".

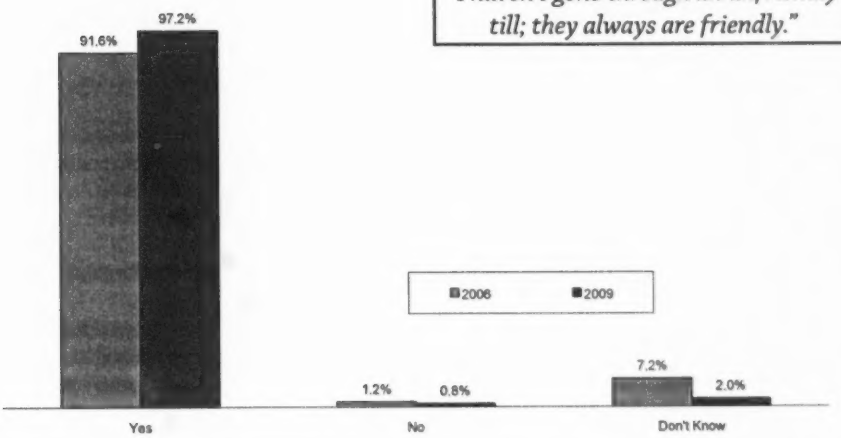
6. *Did you want the staff to help you?*



"The staff is very helpful in explaining and making suggestions. I've been pleased."

Of all customers surveyed in 2009, over 60% stated they did want help from the staff. This is a slight increase from the 2006 results.

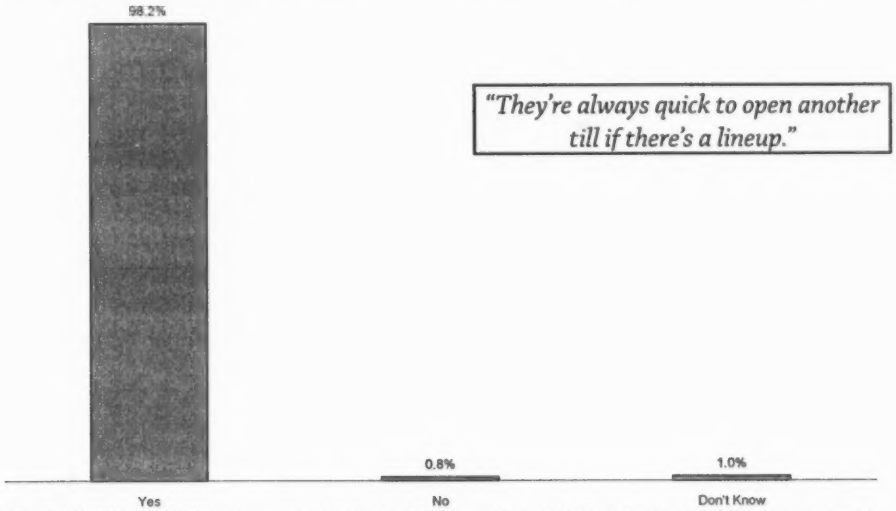
7. *Was the staff friendly and courteous?*



"I haven't gone through an unfriendly till; they always are friendly."

In 2009, a full 97% of customers surveyed reported that the staff were "friendly and courteous". This is an improvement when compared with the results from the 2006 survey, where 92% of customers felt the staff were "friendly and courteous".

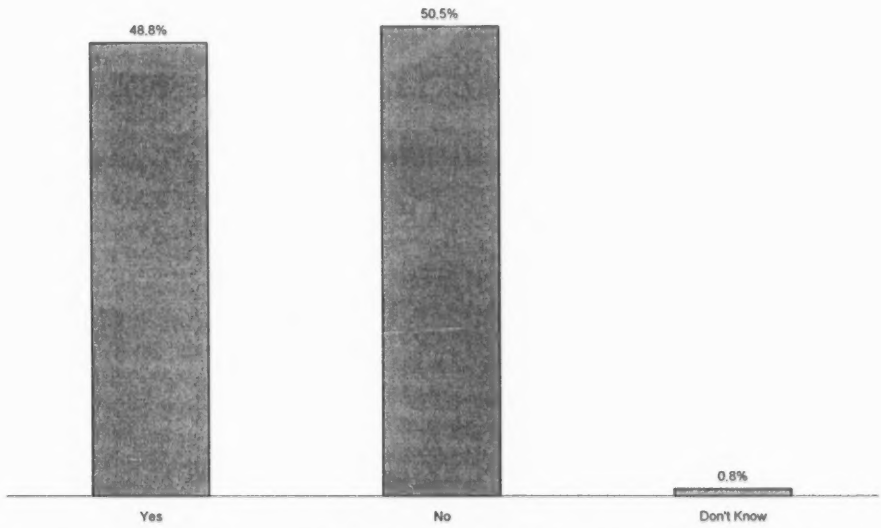
8. Are your purchases usually processed quickly and efficiently at the till?



"They're always quick to open another till if there's a lineup."

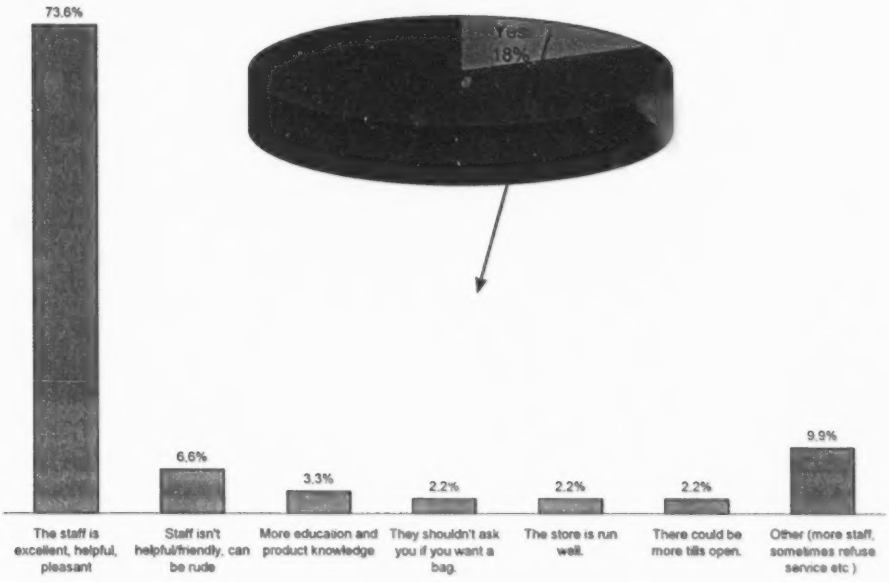
Only 4 of 503, or 0.8% of respondents to this question felt that their purchases were not processed quickly and efficiently.

9. Is it important for you to be provided a bag for your purchases?



Responses to this question were fairly evenly split, with just over half feeling that it was not important for them to be provided with a bag with their purchases.

10. Do you have any other comments about the customer service?



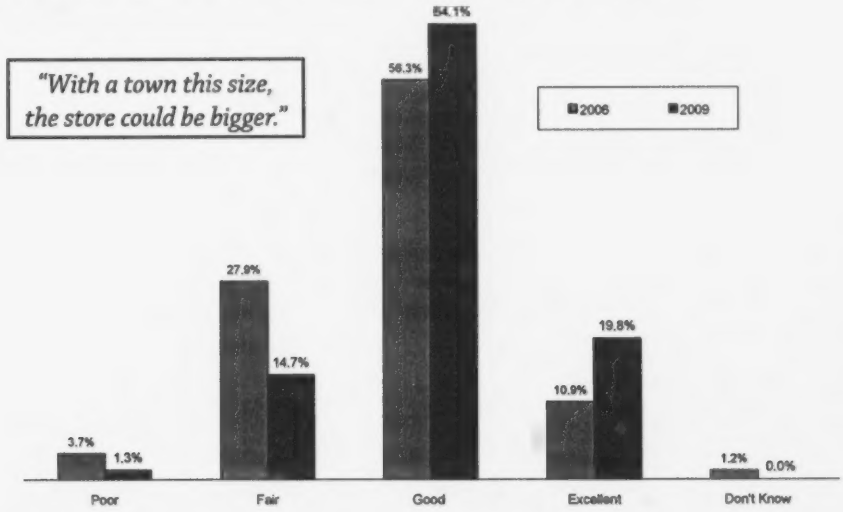
When customers were asked if they had any other comments relating to customer service, 82% did not have any further comments. Of those customers who answered yes, almost three-quarters of the responses related to how good the customer service and/or staff were in the Whitehorse store. There were many comments about the friendliness of the staff and that they did a good job.

"It's good to have knowledgeable workers."

"The customer service is not as good as it can be. It needs a product consultant. Some employees know about the products but they don't have time."

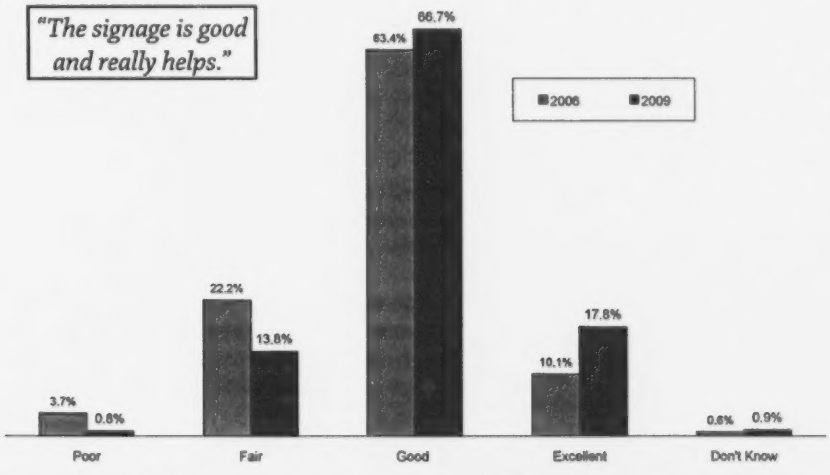
STORE INTERIOR

11. a) Overall, how would you rate the inside of the store?



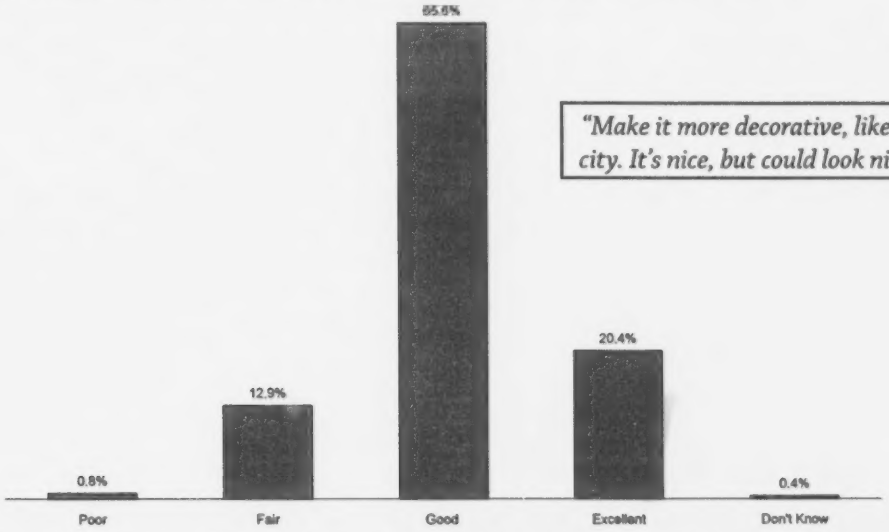
The 2009 survey results indicate that customers were more pleased with the inside of the store than in 2006. In 2006, 67% of customers rated the store interior as "good" or "excellent", while in 2009, 84% of customers felt the store's interior rated as "good" or "excellent". ***Note:*** *In the summer of 2007, the Whitehorse Liquor Store underwent renovations which, according to the response to this question, seemed to be well-received by the customers.*

11. b) Overall, how would you rate the layout of the store?



Customers in the 2009 survey also rated the store's layout higher than in 2006. In 2009, 85% of customers rated the layout of the store as "good" or "excellent". This compares to 74% in 2006.

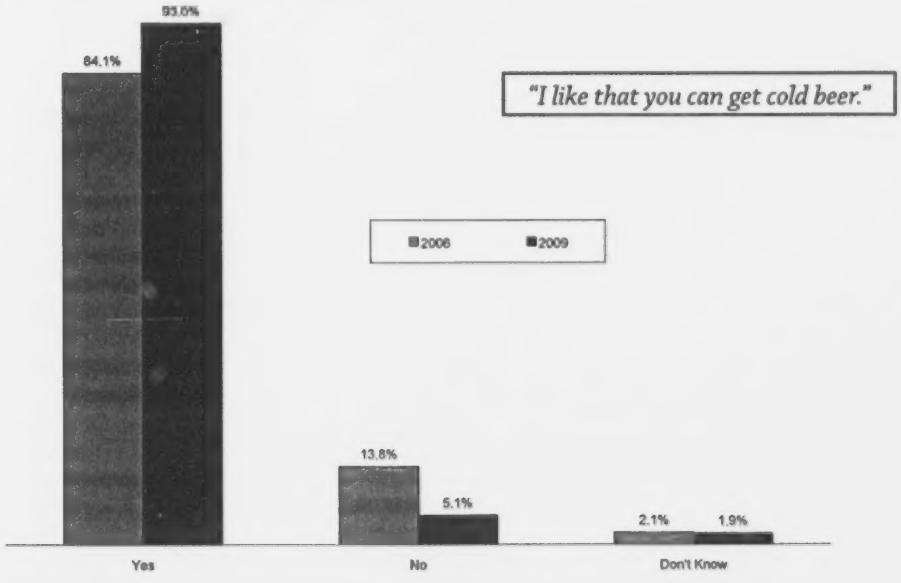
11. c) Overall, how would you rate the cleanliness of the store?



"Make it more decorative, like the city. It's nice, but could look nicer."

Customers also rated the store's cleanliness relatively high. In the 2009 survey, 86% of customers rated the store's cleanliness as "good" or "excellent". *(This question was not asked in the 2006 survey).*

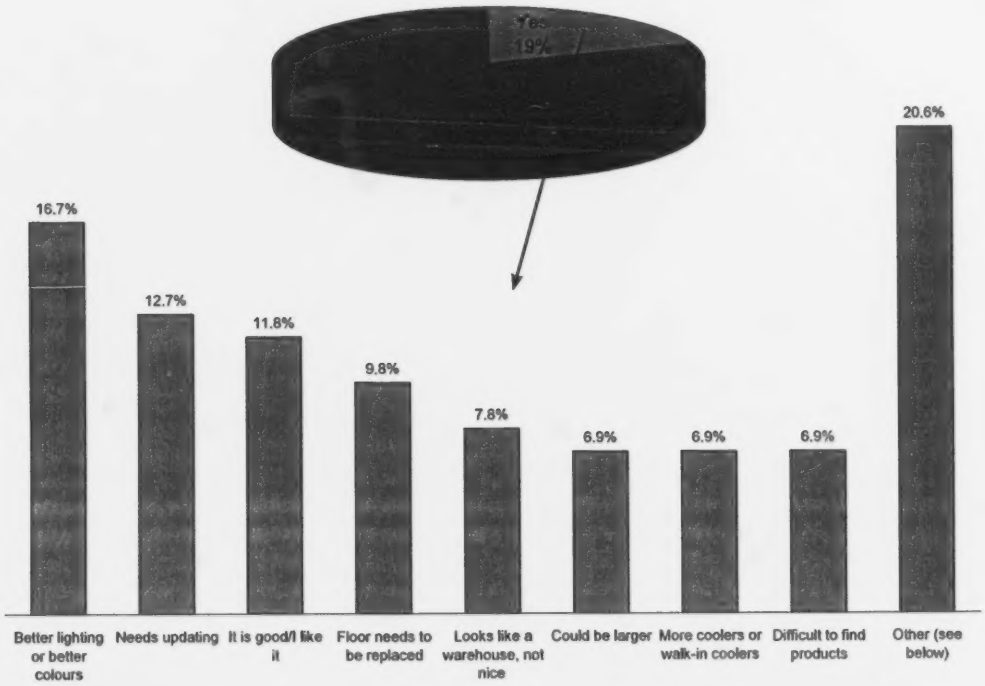
12. Can you easily find the products you are looking for?



"I like that you can get cold beer."

The vast majority of customers in 2009 also indicated that the products they were looking for were easily found. In 2009, the percentage of customers who answered "yes" to this question increased by 9 percentage points (to 93%) compared to 2006.

13. Do you have any other comments about the interior of the store?



Of the 102 customers who indicated they had other comments relating to the interior of the store, 17% related how the store could use better lighting or better paint colours. There were quite a few comparisons to liquor stores in other areas of the country being more inviting and better lighting *(e.g. Eastern Canada and British Columbia)*.

The second most common comments (13%), were more vague, stating that the store in general could use updating or a facelift. There were also several comments stating that the store looked or felt like a warehouse. Several respondents also felt that the floor was in disrepair and should be replaced.

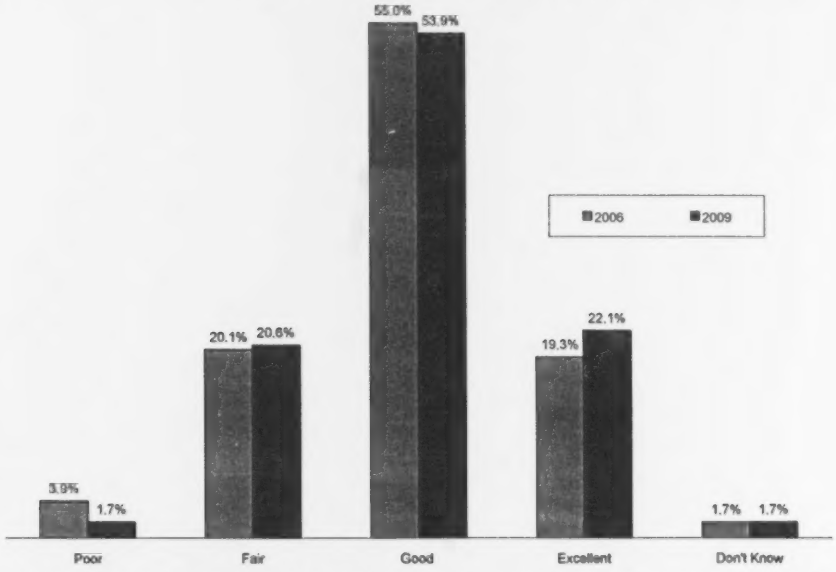
Twelve percent of respondents felt that the store was good and they liked it as it is.

The "Other" category included: *needs better layouts and displays; the music is too loud; shelving is too high; more tills open on the weekend; too expensive; should have carts to put kids in; it needs to be cleaner; smells like stale beer; checkout tills too narrow; more selection of wine; make it look like Ontario stores; it's better than it used to be; etc.*

> *"Poor lighting, it's dark in here. Liquor stores in eastern Canada are more warm and inviting with lots of light on products."*

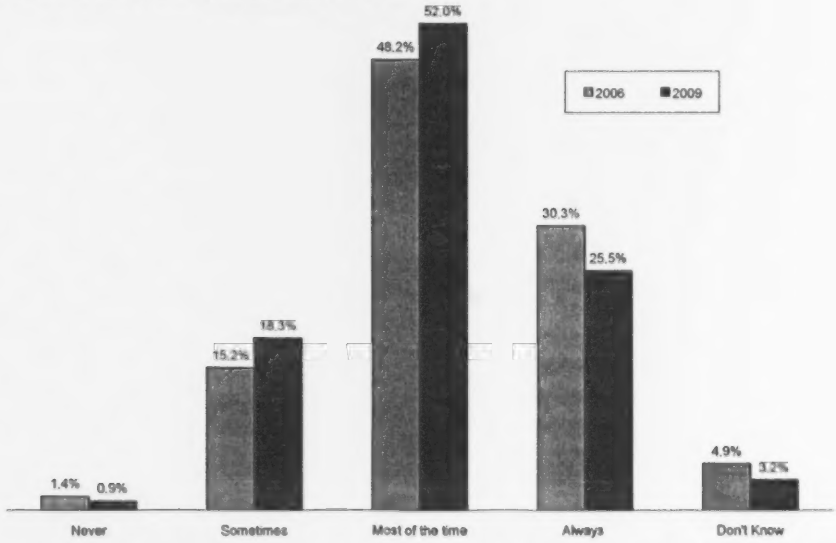
PRODUCTS

14. Overall, what is your opinion of the range of products we have?



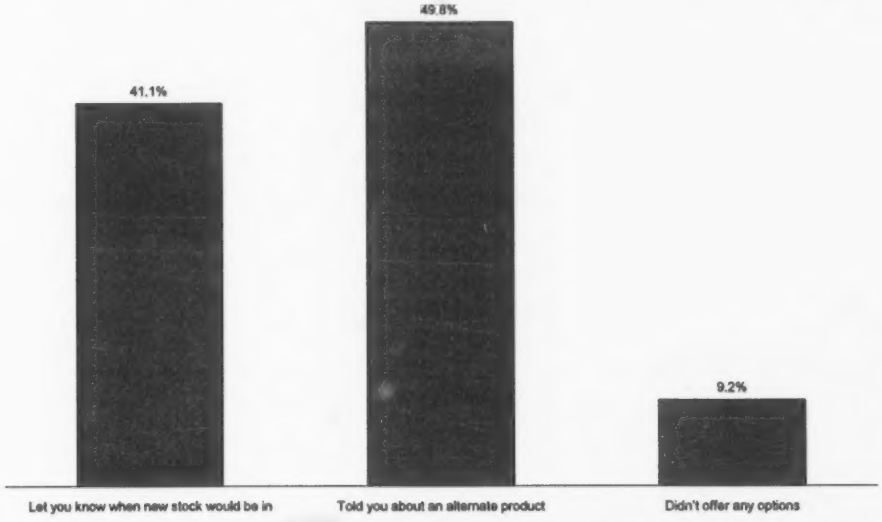
The 2009 survey results to this question indicate very little difference from the same question asked in the 2006 survey. In 2006, 74% of customers rated the store's range of products as "good" or "excellent", while in 2009, 76% of customers felt the store's range of products rated "good" or "excellent".

15. Do we carry the products you want?



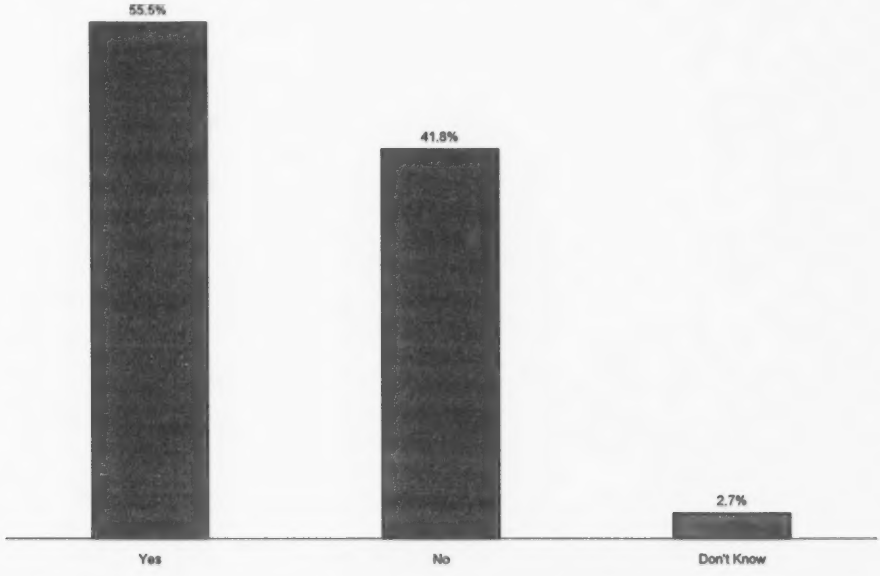
Responses to this question in the 2009 survey, also indicate very little difference from responses to the same question asked in the 2006 survey. In 2006, 79% of customers stated that the store "most of the time" or "always" carried the products they wanted. In 2009, 78% of customers felt this was true.

16. *If the product you wanted was out of stock, what options did the staff offer you?*



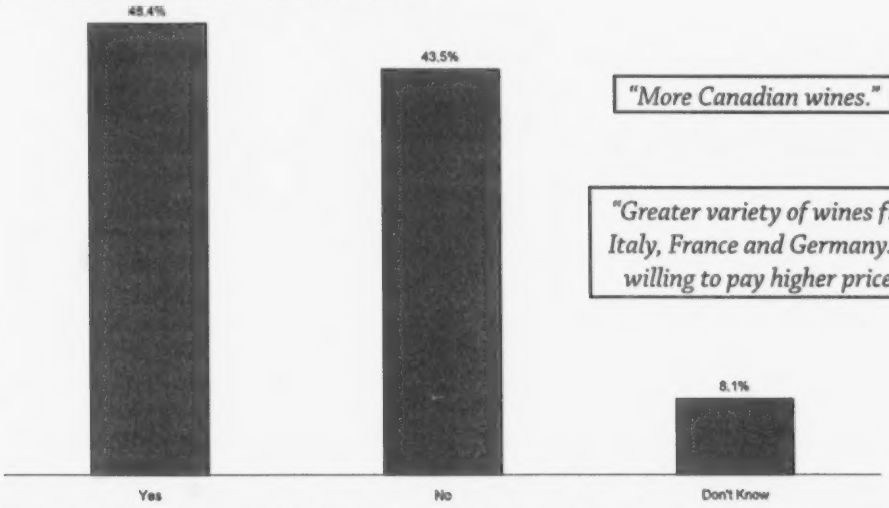
Over 90% of customers were offered an option when the product they wanted was out of stock. Half of the customers were told about an alternate product while 41% were told they could be contacted when the product was in stock. The remaining 9% of customers reported they were offered no options at all.

17. *If we do not normally carry the product you want, does the staff explain the special order process to you?*



The majority of customers stated that the staff did explain the special order process to them.

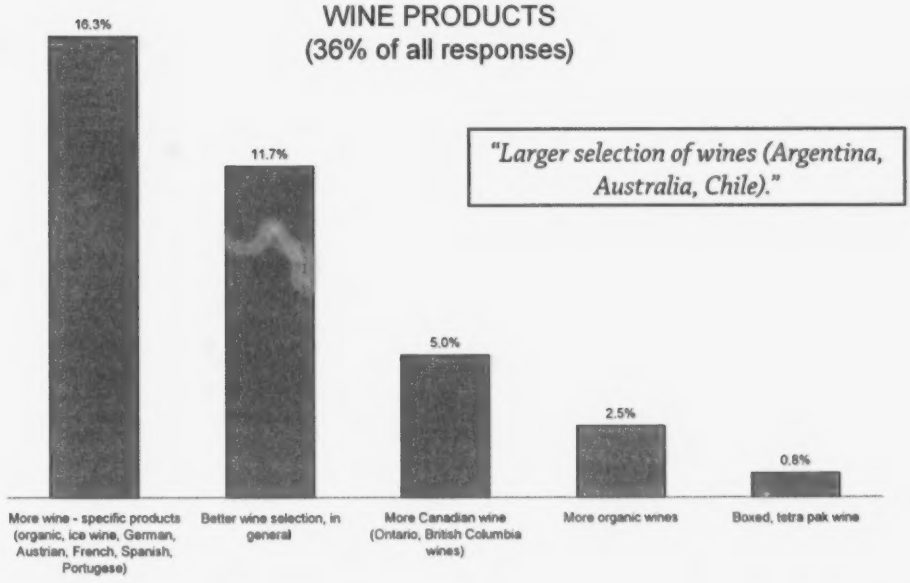
18. a) Should we carry other products?



Nearly half of all customers felt that the store should carry other products. Those customers were then asked what other products should be carried.

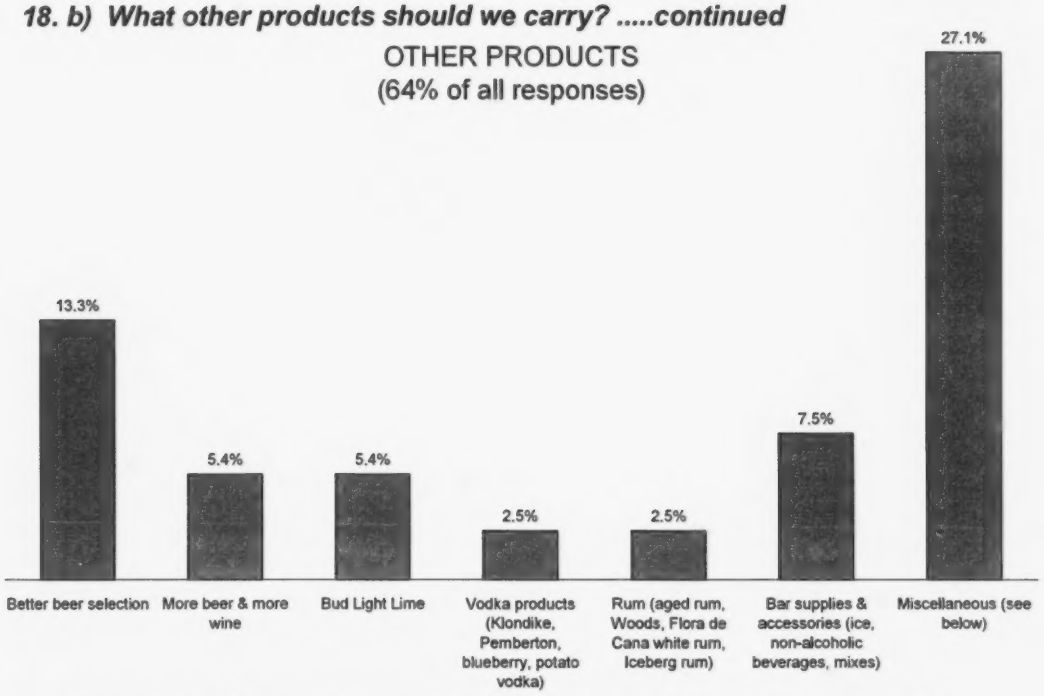
18. b) What other products should we carry?

There were 240 responses to this question, with more than one-third pertaining to wine. Wine responses are displayed separately in the graph below while the remaining responses are displayed on the following page.



*Percentages displayed are based on the percentage of the **overall** responses to this question.*

18. b) What other products should we carry? .....continued



There was a wide range of responses to this question with many customers suggesting that a broader range of both wine and beer products be carried by the store.

Of the 240 total comments, there were 87 comments relating to wine with suggestions ranging from specific brands *(Arbour Mist, Greg Norman, Naked Grapes, etc.)* to wines from specific countries *(German, Austrian, French, Spanish, Portugese, etc.)*. There were also suggestions to increase the number of organic and ice wines.

There were 58 comments relating to beer as well. The majority of these were to just carry more beer in general, but there were also some specific beers mentioned that should be carried *(Bud Light Lime, Labatts Blue Light, Sam Adams, Wildcat Beer, etc.)*. There were also suggestions to carry beer from specific provinces or countries *(Saskatchewan, Newfoundland, Quebec, United States, etc.)*.

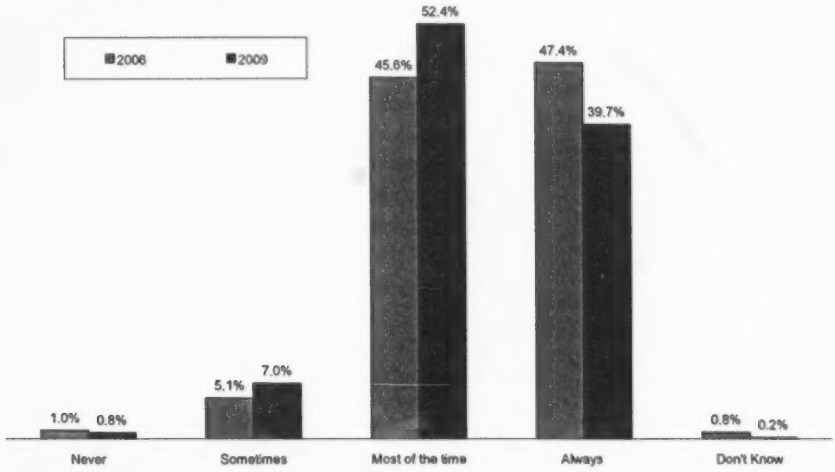
Note: *Bud Light Lime was introduced in Canada in the summer of 2009. There were shortages of this product as demand outstripped supply in all Canadian liquor jurisdictions.*

There were 18 comments suggesting that the liquor store should carry mixes, non-alcoholic drinks, energy drinks, ice, bar guides, and books,.

There were 12 suggestions for hard liquor and liqueurs as well. A sample of the suggestions are; *Flora De Cana White Rum, Bell's Whiskey, Maple Whiskey, Smirnoff Watermelon Vodka, Smirnoff Green Apple Vodka, better high-end Scotch, aged rum, 15-20 year-old rum; good tequila; etc.*

The 65 "miscellaneous" responses included: *more coolers in different varieties; Okanagan ciders; more new products; cocoa liqueurs; more products in the range of $10, etc.*

19. When you visit this liquor store, do you generally know in advance what you are going to buy?

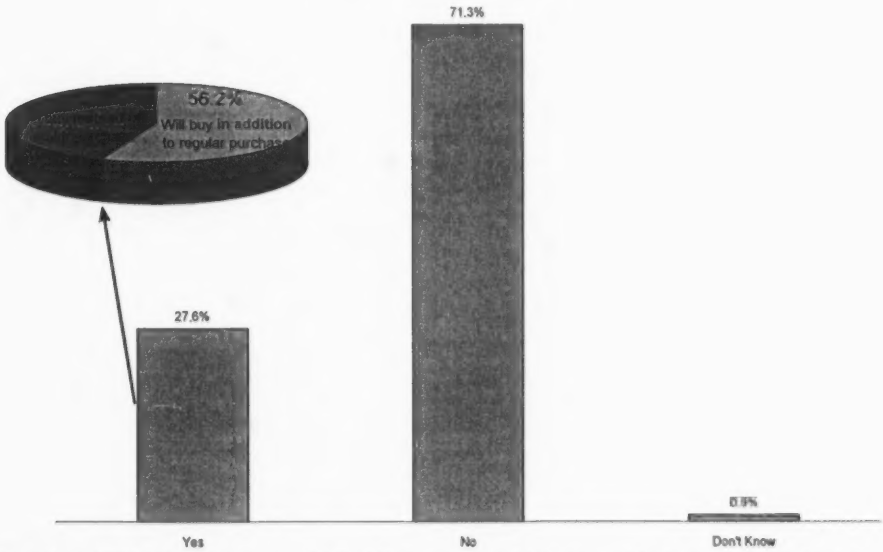


In 2009, the majority of customers (52%) stated they knew "most of the time" what they were going to buy at the liquor store. In 2006, 48% of customers stated they "always" knew what they would purchase, more than any other category.

20. a) Do any of the following influence what you buy?

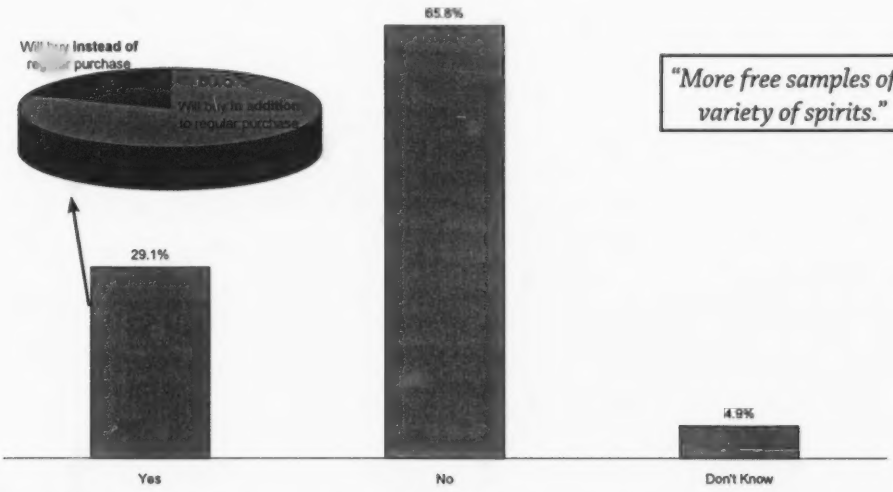
"On-packs"

(Free products attached to the bottles - 50ml free bottle, wine stoppers etc.)



More than 70% of customers said that they were **not** influenced to buy products by *"on-packs"*. For the 28% (25% of all male customers and 29% of all female customers) who said they **were** influenced to buy because of *"on-packs"*, more than half said they would buy that product in addition to their regular purchase.

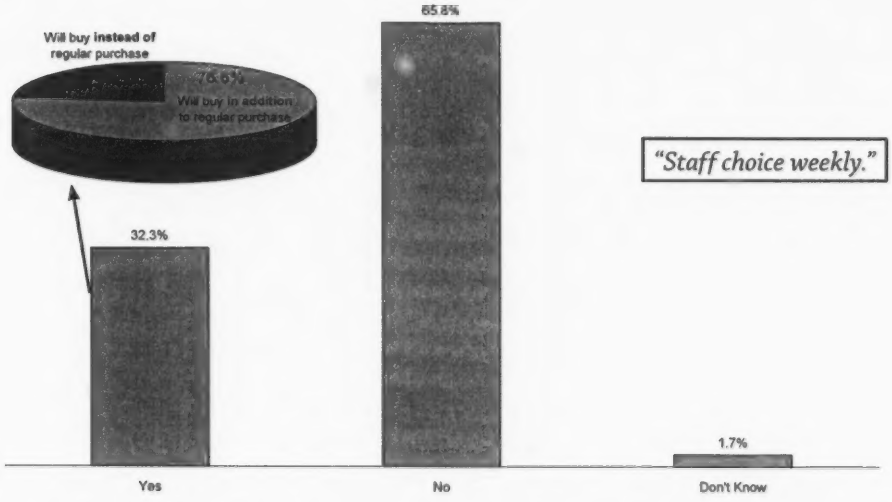
20. b) Do any of the following influence what you buy?.....continued
"In-store tasting"



"More free samples of a variety of spirits."

Almost two-thirds of all customers said that they would **not** be influenced to buy a product because of *"in-store tasting"*. For the 29% (27% of all male customers and 31% of all female customers) who said they **were** influenced by "*in-store tasting*", 80% said they would buy that product in addition to their regular purchase.

20. c) Do any of the following influence what you buy?.....continued
"Store displays"

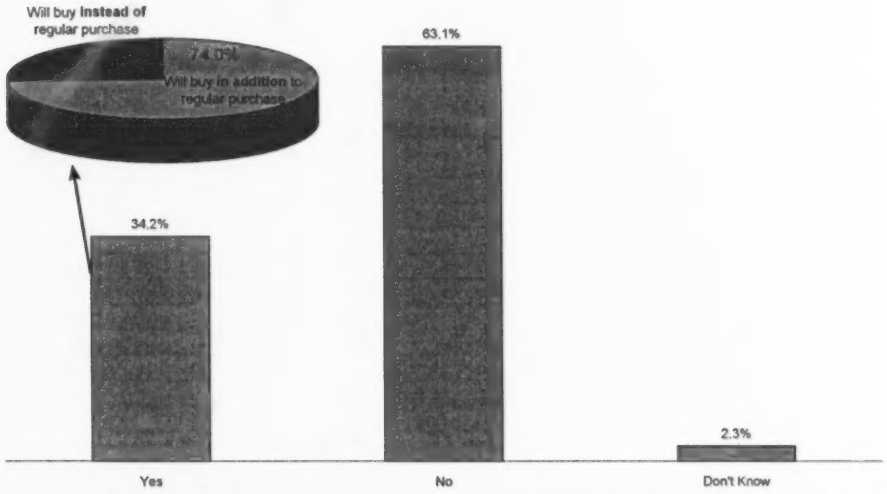


"Staff choice weekly."

Again, almost two-thirds of customers said that they were **not** influenced to buy products based on "*store displays*". For the 32% (27% of all male customers and 36% of all female customers) who said they **were** influenced to buy based on "*store displays*", more than three-quarters said they would buy that product in addition to their regular purchase.

20. d) Do any of the following influence what you buy?.....continued

"Feature products"

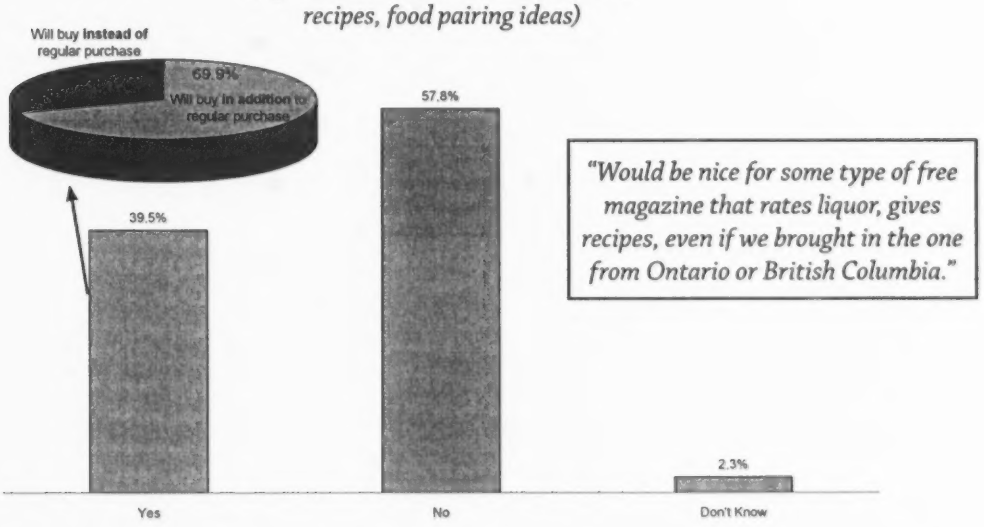


Just less than two-thirds of customers said that they were **not** influenced to buy products based on "*featured products*". For the 34% (33% of all male customers and 35% of all female customers) who said they **were** influenced to buy based on "*featured products*", almost three-quarters said they would buy that product in addition to their regular purchase.

20. e) Do any of the following influence what you buy?.....continued

"Information on products"

(e.g. what it tastes like, how to use it, recipes, food pairing ideas)

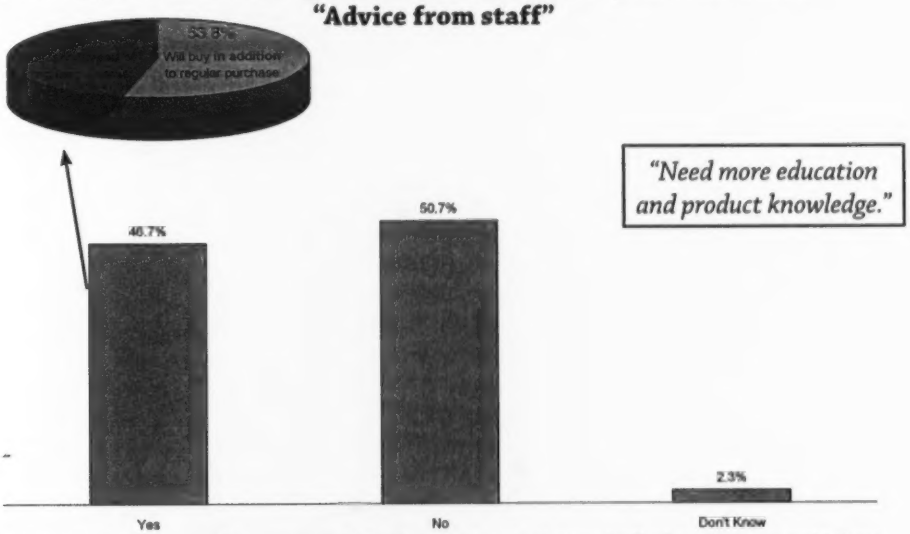


"Would be nice for some type of free magazine that rates liquor, gives recipes, even if we brought in the one from Ontario or British Columbia."

Over half of customers said that they were **not** influenced to buy products based on "*product information*". For the 40% (36% of all male customers and 42% of all female customers) who said they **were** influenced to buy based on "*product information*", almost 70% said they would buy that product in addition to their regular purchase.

20. f) Do any of the following influence what you buy?.....continued

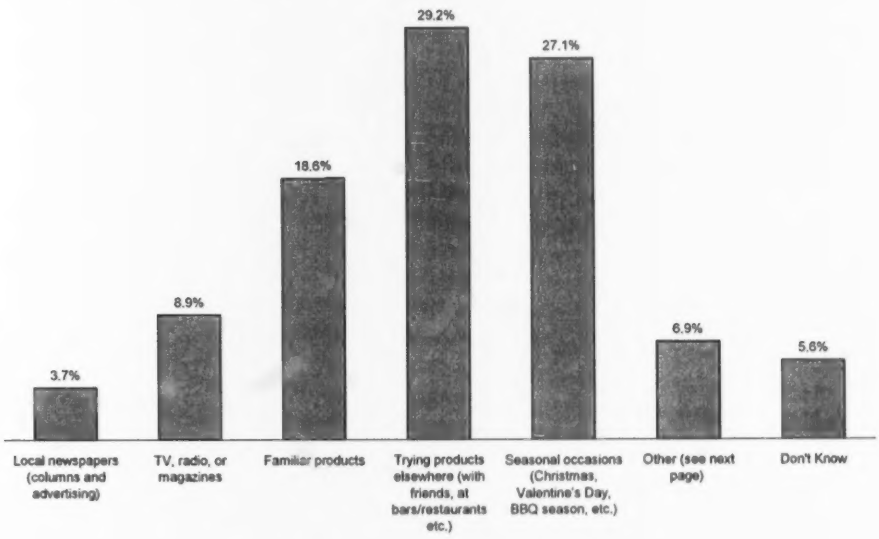
"Advice from staff"



"Need more education and product knowledge."

Responses to this question were split fairly evenly. Just over half of customers said they would **not** buy a product based on the *"advice from staff"*. For the 47% (46% of all male customers and 48% of all female customers) who said they **were** influenced to buy based on *"advice from staff"*, just over half said they would buy that product in addition to their regular purchase.

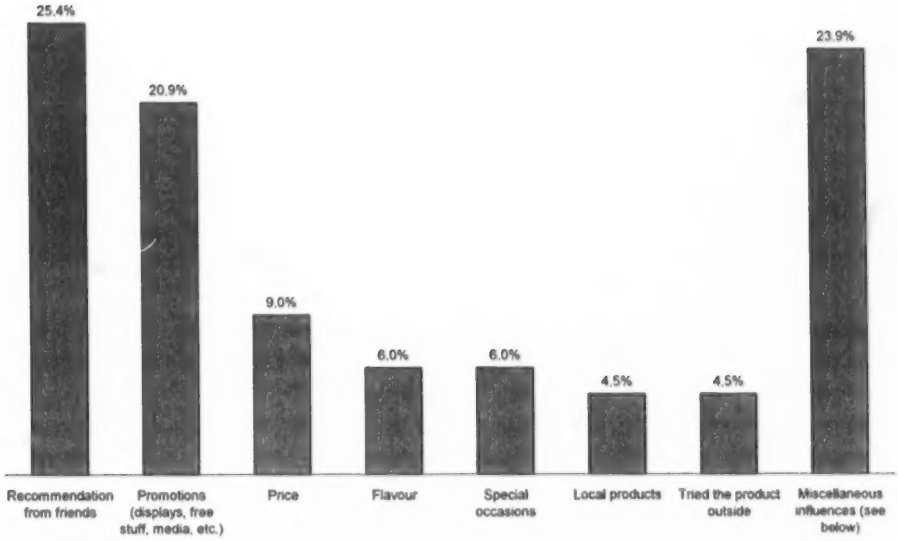
21. What else influences what you buy?



For this question, customers were asked to list **all** items that influence them to buy a product, so a customer could choose multiple responses. Over half of all responses related to trying products elsewhere *(with friends, at bars or restaurants, wine festivals, etc.)* or seasonal occasions *(Christmas, Valentine's Day, BBQ season, etc.)*.

21. What else influences what you buy?....continued

"Other" responses
(7% of all responses)



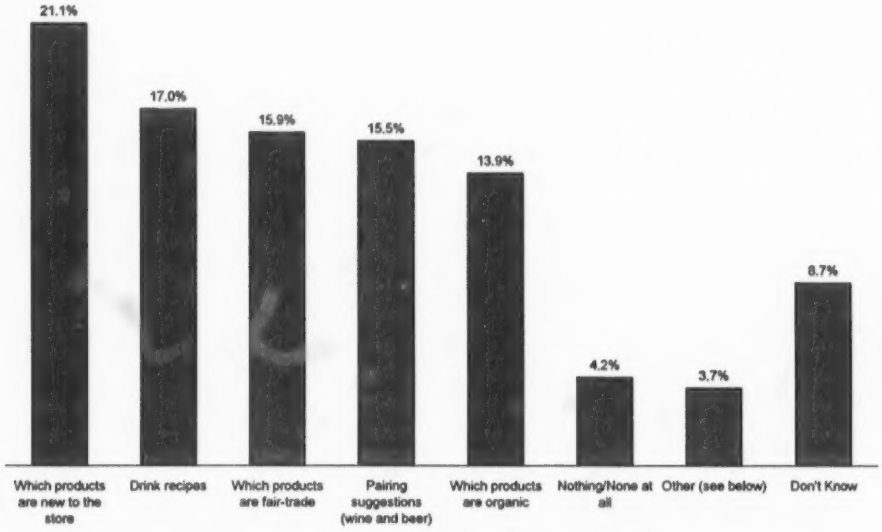
There were 67 responses that did not fall into the categories listed on the survey form *(displayed on the graph on the previous page)*. For the "other" response category, respondents provided a wide range of additional factors that would influence them to buy a product. One-quarter of the "other" responses related to being influenced to buy a product based on a recommendation from friends. Another 21% stated they were influenced by promotions *(displays, free stuff, media, etc.)*.

Some of the miscellaneous influences include; *Canadian products; personal preference; new products; for recipes; for entertaining; thirst; buy it for clientèle at my business; because I feel like it; temperature outside; if I have enough money in my wallet; the loonie to the (US) dollar; etc.*

"Advice from knowledgeable friends."

"Word of mouth from staff."

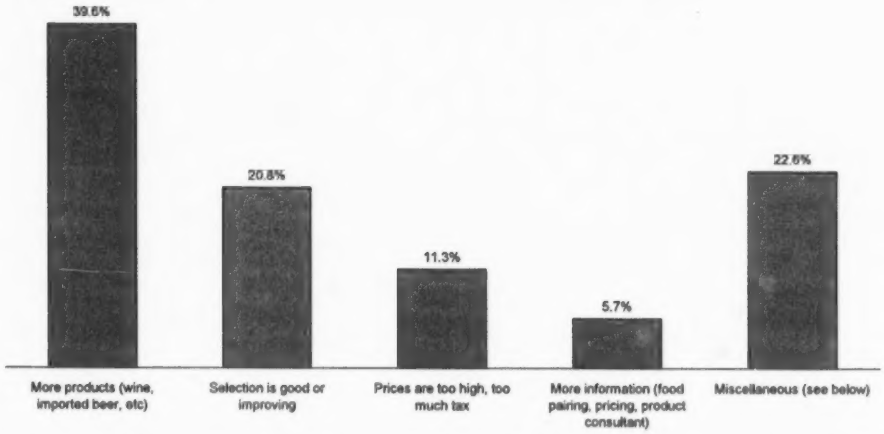
22. *What additional information would you like to have in the store about the products we carry?*



For this question, customers were also able to give multiple responses, and there was a total of 976 responses to this question.

There were 36 comments in the "other" category and they include: *information about content; magazines and articles about the products; free samples; country of origin of products; cooking recipes; etc.*

23. *Do you have any other comments about the products?*

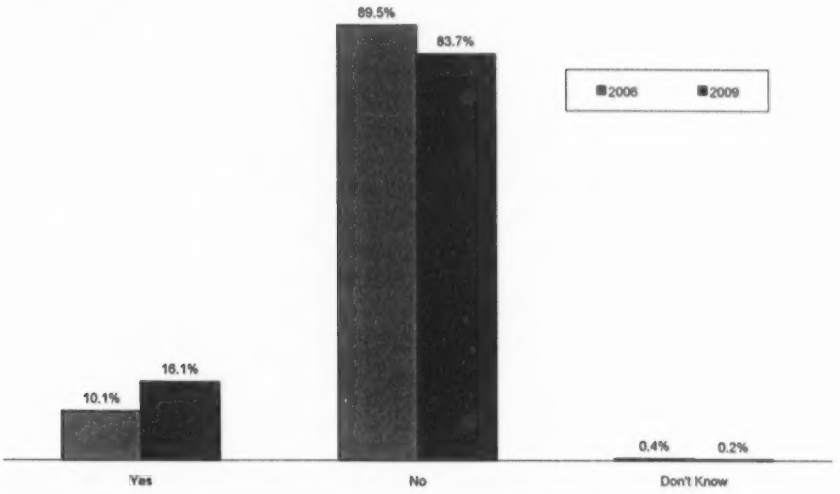


There were 53 responses to this question, with 40% relating to better product selection.

There were 12 comments in the "miscellaneous" category and they include; *more cooled products; more samples and promotions; sell mixes; etc.*

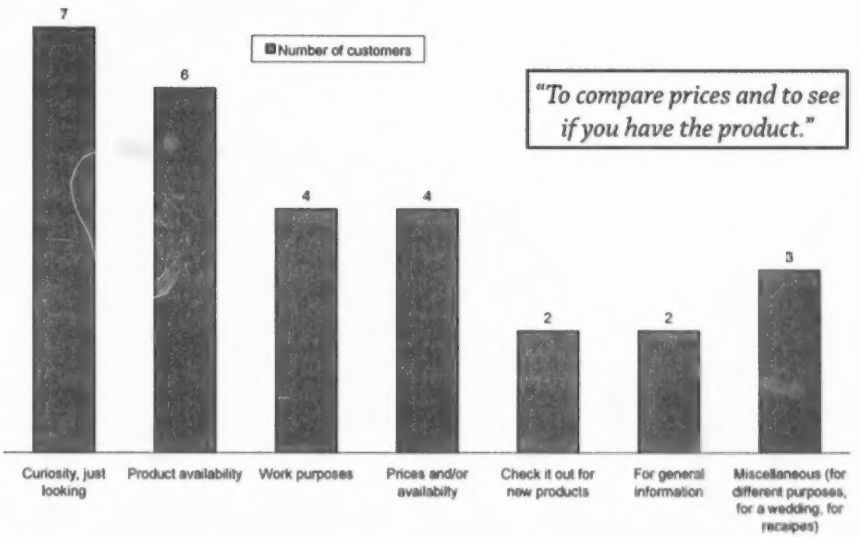
WEBSITE

24. Do you know about our website?



The 2009 survey results indicate a slight increase in the percentage of customers who knew about the website compared to the 2006 survey. In 2006, 10% of customers knew of the website, while in 2009, 16% of customers did.

24. a) For those that visited our website, for what purpose did you visit it?



Of the 85 customers who said they did know about the website, 28 stated that they had visited the site. The reasons for visiting the website are displayed in this graph.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

If there was one thing that would make a difference so you would enjoy shopping here more, other than low prices, what would that be?

There were 260 comments to this question. Below is a summary of the responses:

45	More variety, better selection
28	Free samples/liquor
22	Nothing
17	Get rid of the people outside; safety outside the store
15	A different look (more modern, less warehouse-like, different lighting, colour)
13	Longer/better hours
9	Special offers, promotions
9	More information on the product (pairing, recipes)
9	Sell refrigerated products (alcohol, beer, vodka)
8	Better parking
6	More staff to answer questions, a product consultant/expert
6	Better location
73	Miscellaneous (more tills; cleaner;sell other products[cigarettes, mix etc]; drive through sales;don't let children in the store; have buskers; etc)

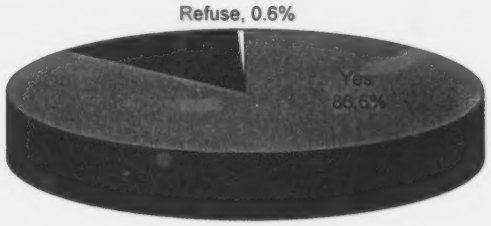
Is there anything else you would like to tell us?

There were 79 comments to this question. Below is a summary of the responses:

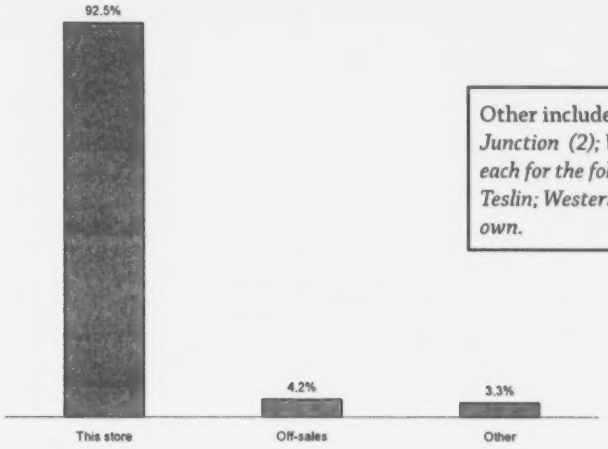
12	Satisfied, in general
11	Satisfied with the staff
11	Better selection of products/other products
45	Miscellaneous (lower the prices; make it look better; more wine tasting; don't sell alcohol to intoxicated people; bothered by the people outside; give free information material: calendars, magazines, recipes; sell cigarettes; sell mixes; stay closed on Sundays; don't move the store; I don't like the music; should be open all the time, etc)

RESPONDENTS PROFILE

Do you live in the Yukon?

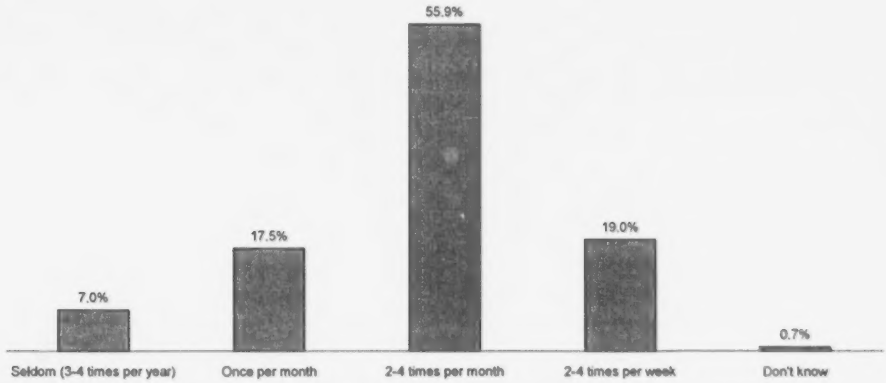


Where do you normally buy your liquor products?



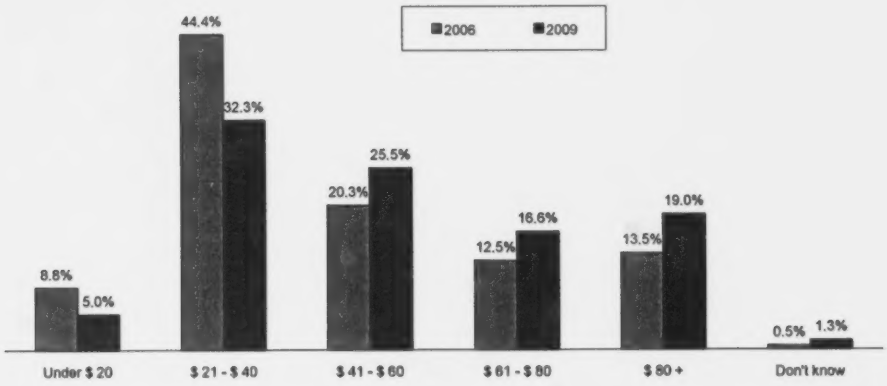
Other includes: *Yukon Brewing (5); Haines Junction (2); Watson Lake (2); one response each for the following-Carmacks; Faro; Mayo; Teslin; Western USA; Wine Club; and makes own.*

How often do you visit this store?



Three-quarters of Whitehorse Liquor Store customers visit the store at least once every two weeks and 92% visit at least once per month.

How much do you normally spend each time at this store?



The 2009 survey results indicate in general customers spent more per store visit in 2009 than customers in the 2006 survey. In 2009, 61% of customers spent at least $40 per visit compared to 46% of customers in 2006.

Gender of customer

The gender of the customers was reported by the interviewers.

Approximate age of customer

The interviewers also estimated the customers' age and assigned each to one of the three age categories shown below.